



For Immediate Release  
December 20, 2001

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## **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE EARLY CHRISTMAS PRESENT FROM STANISLAUS COUNTY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION**

**Modesto, Ca.** --- The New Year is bringing new funding for community groups thanks to the state tobacco tax and the Stanislaus County Children and Families Commission.

Last night, the Commission awarded nineteen Undesignated Pilot grants totaling \$624,890 to help improve the lives of children and families in Stanislaus County. The grants fund such things as literacy, school readiness and parent education programs aimed at strengthening families.

“The grants funded will greatly benefit children and families in our community. We want the programs to be successful,” said Noe Paramo, Commission Executive Director.

This was the second time around for some of the organizations. Last September, the Commission asked that the United Way of Stanislaus County revisit some grant applications. The non-profit agency is partnering with the Commission to help administer the Prop 10 money.

“We asked organizations that had applied for undesignated grants to provide us additional information or clarification about their proposals,” said Dorali Mitre, Community Impact Associate with United Way.

Some applications were recommended for full funding while others were recommended for partial funding. Applicants awarded Undesignated grants submitted proposals that targeted the following strategic results: Improved Child Development, Improved Systems for Families, Improved Family Functioning, and Improved Child Health.

California State University, Stanislaus was awarded \$50,000 for a project designed to promote healthy eating and nutrition in the Southeast Asian community. Parent training workshops are planned on topics such as the importance of breast-feeding and the dangers of high fat diets. Parents will also learn how to read food labels. "The program will allow us to do some real teaching. This was the best Christmas present we could have received," said Cammie Lear, co-director of The Bridge.

Another organization awarded funding was the Center for Human Services. It received \$49,900 for a bilingual program entitled "On the Safe Side". The aim is to keep children safe and healthy by educating them in basic bicycle and traffic safety principles.

"Our goal is to decrease bicycle and pedestrian accidents. This grant will enable us to target children in pre-school and nursery school," said Executive Director Linda Kovacs.

The money distributed is part of the first round of funding from Prop.10 tobacco tax money. Since September, the Commission has awarded \$2.8 million in grants to the community.

Funding for early childhood programs is unique. While studies indicate that a child's experience in the first years of life have a profound impact on education, social and economic outcomes, most public spending for children is focused on the years after the majority of brain growth has occurred. Funds generated from Prop. 10 support children at a local level, from prenatal to age five, by creating a comprehensive and integrated system of information and services to promote early childhood development and anti-tobacco education programs.

The Stanislaus County Children and Families Commission was established in 1998 after California voters passed Proposition 10, an unprecedented statewide initiative that levied a 50-cent tax per pack on cigarettes. Stanislaus County receives around 7.2 million dollars a year from the tobacco tax.

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